



## Carrickfergus Borough Council Play Strategy 2013-2016

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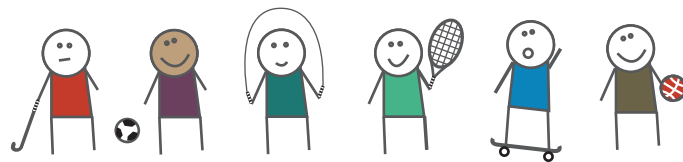
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Carrickfergus Borough

# playstrategy

2013-2016





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Carrickfergus Borough Council would like to thank the European Union's PEACE III programme, managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the Carrickfergus, Antrim and Newtownabbey (CAN) PEACE III Partnership in the funding of this document and the 'Green Kids in outer Space' programme.

We would also like to thank Venturei Network, Sean McIntyre (University of Ulster) and PlayBoard (NI) for their professional assistance in compiling this document.

Our sincere appreciation is given to the elected members of Carrickfergus Borough Council and members of the Carrickfergus Play & Leisure Partnership for their support and guidance throughout this process.



# FOREWORD

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**I am delighted to introduce Carrickfergus Borough's Play Strategy. This document is for all our Boroughs' citizens but especially our children, young people and their families.**

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Children and young people's play is one of the most important aspects of their lives and is central to their health, happiness and development. This strategy clearly demonstrates how good play opportunities supports the priorities of and for children and young people in Carrickfergus Borough.

The vision for all young people to have the opportunity to develop through play is rightly ambitious, cutting across leisure, learning, health, work and our environment but it is ultimately achievable.

Carrickfergus Borough Council is very grateful for the valuable financial assistance given by the European Union's (CAN) PEACE III Partnership in the publishing of this document and the associated funding of 'Green Kids in Outer Space'.

The Green Kids in Outer Space programme has been really valuable for helping to hear what our young people are saying about what they would like to see and what gets in the way of them having fun.

Our sincere thanks is also due to the children, parents, teachers and other people working with children whose valuable input helped to shape this document.

I fully support the contribution that play makes to how Carrickfergus develops. As our Council prepares for the Review of Public Administration in 2015, this document sets out the opportunities for our young people to have places to go, to be active and to challenge themselves.

I believe that the commitment to play not only means that young people today will benefit, but that this area itself will continue to flourish in the future.



**Alderman May Beattie**  
Chairperson of the Parks,  
Countryside & Amenities  
Sub-Committee



# 1.0 Executive Summary

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**This document has been prepared in order to provide direction and focus to play provision within Carrickfergus Borough over the period 2013 – 2016. This timeframe places it in line with the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister's (OFMDFM) Play Implementation Plan and the NI Executive's Strategy for Children and Young People 2006 -2016.**

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This strategy has been supported by the CAN PEACE III cluster which comprises of the local authority areas of Carrickfergus, Antrim and Newtownabbey. A CAN Cluster PEACE III Action Plan has been developed which seeks to address the issues of reconciliation, sectarianism and racism and how the Partnership intends to contribute to a lasting peace in the cluster area.

Development of a Play Strategy and the provision of shared space, in the form of play facilities, enable opportunity to contribute to the priorities laid out in the action plan, particularly supporting cohesion and integration and investing in families and young people.

The strategy development process has taken into consideration the regional policy context. In relation to the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan, promoted by OFMDFM, it is conscious of its commitment to play provision and works to progress the play agenda for children, young people, their families/carers and the wider community.



The strategy has been developed through a detailed consultation and strategic planning process involving:-

- Carrickfergus Borough Council
- Carrickfergus Play and Leisure Partnership
- Children and young people across the Borough
- Stakeholders from across the community/ voluntary and statutory sectors with a remit for children and young people and/or play

In addition to the consultation process, the plan has also been informed by a comprehensive strategic review of key policy documents and statistical information. Views were also sought from key stakeholders to consider the wider strategic environment for the Play Strategy and the context within which it will be implemented.

In order to focus its work, and provide direction for the future, Carrickfergus Borough Council through the Play and Leisure Partnership drew up the following mission statement to guide it in its work:-

The Partnership will ensure that play environments and experiences across Carrickfergus Borough are strategically planned and co-ordinated to provide accessible and inclusive play which supports children and young people to reach their physical and emotional potential



Promoting play and leisure as an inter-generational activity, providing opportunity for family participation, was highlighted through the consultation.

Consultation also identified a desire for increased outdoor play provision across the Borough, in addition to a need to ensure family orientated provision, this being the largest user base. The strategy will work to address the barriers to play, identified through consultation, including children who expressed they had “nowhere to go.”

Based on the need identified through user and stakeholder consultation, a series of strategic themes were identified around which the Carrickfergus Borough Council Play Team will direct and focus its energies:

“Children and young people are entitled to use shared public space and should be encouraged to do so... We want our public spaces to be places where individual children and young people and the wider community are at ease with each other.”

OFMDFM Play and Leisure  
Implementation Plan

Strategic Themes			
Places and Spaces for Play	Community Cohesion & Inclusion	Animation Programmes	Awareness & Outreach
Objectives			
Audit of play facilities and potential play space	Recognising the role of play in contributing to stable and sustainable community relations	To increase use of play facilities and participation in play and recreation	Support and promote work of the Play Partnership
To raise awareness of play facilities across the Borough	Ensure that vulnerable children and young people are supported in their play	Increase physical activity among children and young people	Promote play, benefits of play and practical opportunities
To provide a range of high quality accessible space and play facilities for the Borough's citizens	Increase participation in play and use of play resources in areas with low community infrastructure	Development of family based/ inter-generational activities at play parks	Ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to play at Borough level
To maximise use of the area's play facilities	To ensure that all children and young people across the Borough have the opportunity to access and benefit from shared play and leisure opportunities	Encourage use of shared space by older children and young people	Ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to play under the new “super council” structure
	Support inter-generational working	Work with local residents/communities to enhance green spaces to promote opportunity for quality play	

Key to implementing the agreed strategic themes and addressing these issues will be the participation of the Play Partnership, which will meet to ensure ongoing implementation of the Play strategy and act as a local driver for highlighting and encouraging access to play opportunities across the Carrickfergus Borough. The Play Partnership is comprised of Members and officers with a remit in the key areas of Parks and Countryside, Good Relations, Policy and Equality, Community Services, Policing and Community Safety, Community Services, Sports Development and Environmental Health, in addition to stakeholders from the voluntary and public sectors, recognising the cross sectoral nature of play provision.

Section 6 outlines the monitoring and evaluation indicators which will be used to measure and assess the implementation of the strategy and the extent to which it is achieving its objectives. The process will be overseen by the Play Partnership which meets on a quarterly basis.

This strategic plan provides Carrickfergus Borough Council and its play partners with the actions, direction and focus to move forward in a positive and constructive manner, enabling the Partnership to work to support peace building and reconciliation through accessible, innovative play provision which is tailored to local needs and seeks to provide sustainable outcomes for the local community, notably children and young people, their families and carers.



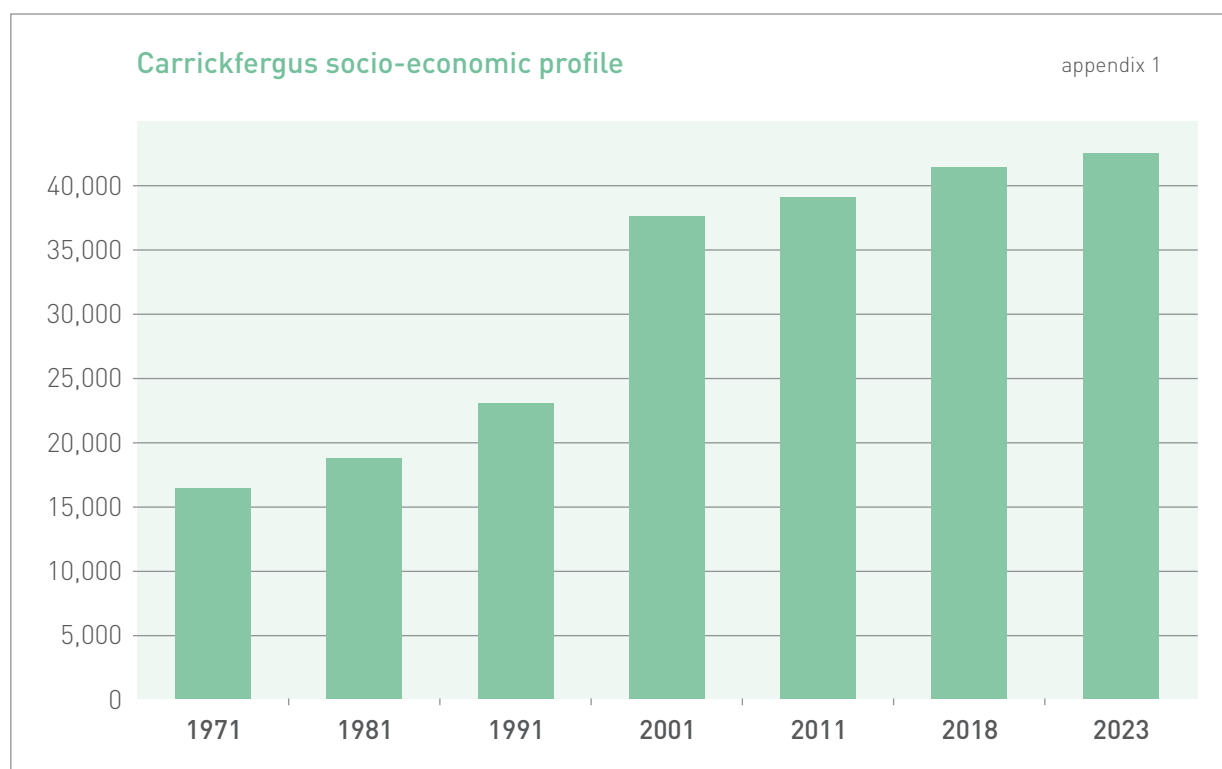


## 2.0 Mapping of Play Provision

Carrickfergus Borough Council has undertaken a robust mapping exercise, identifying the scale of and need for play infrastructure across the Borough. This has been further informed by a socio-economic profile, summarised below with further information appended to this strategy (see appendix 1)

Between 1971 and 2011 there has been a 57.55% increase in the population of Carrickfergus. This is much higher than the 8.60% increase for Northern Ireland over the same time period. The population of Carrickfergus is projected to grow by a further 6.80% to 41,970 by 2023.

This growth has been generated through a healthy birth rate. In 2011 there were 81 more births than deaths in Carrickfergus. However there has been a decline in the number of people under 16 years old living in Carrickfergus between the 2001 and 2011 Census. The number of people under 16 years old decreased from 22.62% in 2001 to 19.70% in 2011. This decline of 2.92% is higher than the 2.67% decrease for Northern Ireland in the same period. The district also contains fewer people under 16 years old at the 2011 Census (19.70%) compared to the Northern Ireland average (20.95%).



The table below sets out the current and projected number of young people in Carrickfergus.

Age Group	2011	2016	2020	2023
0-4	2,350	2,377	2,398	2,387
5-9	2,282	2,397	2,390	2,404
10-14	2,496	2,353	2,390	2,347
15-19	2,726	2,395	2,231	2,271
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,854</b>	<b>9,522</b>	<b>9,409</b>	<b>9,409</b>

Source: NIRSA

#### The table above shows:

- There are currently 9,854 young people in Carrickfergus Borough
- A decline of 4.73% in the number of people aged between 0 and 19 by 2023
- An increase of 1.55% in the number of people aged between 0 and 4 by 2023
- An increase of 5.08% in the number of people aged between 5 and 9 by 2023 (a key 'play group')
- A decline of 6.35% in the number of people aged between 10 and 14 by 2023.



#### The poverty, deprivation, and education statistical information for Carrickfergus reveals that:

- 9.34% of the households in Carrickfergus are lone parent households with dependent children, which is slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average (9.13%)
- A large proportion of the households in Carrickfergus are in relative poverty (27.90%). However this is lower than the Northern Ireland average (30.20%)
- 11.30% of post-primary school pupils in Carrickfergus receive free school meals which is lower than the Northern Ireland average (18.50%)
- 10% of the Carrickfergus population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland
- 18.0% of the total population are income deprived compared to 25.0% for Northern Ireland
- 73.3% of school leavers in Carrickfergus achieved 5 or more GCSEs, which is similar to the Northern Ireland average (73.2%)
- There were fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour in Carrickfergus (2.65%) compared to Northern Ireland (3.61%).

## Mapping Meaningful Solutions Programme

**Greenisland** - Consultation informing the mapping exercise in Greenisland identified; the need for upgrading some of the facilities, such as the play area/playground, the lack of a play park and facilities/open space for children outside the estate, a lack of green space for children and a need for (upgraded) play facilities. Lack of facilities for older young people was also a concern - specifically young people gathering on some week nights to drink alcohol at Greenisland Train Station, causing concern for both local residents and train users. The play area was also identified as a site for anti-social behaviour, often marred by broken glass, creating reluctance for parents to take their children there.

**Whitehead** - Consultation in Whitehead identified a need for more facilities, including improvements to play areas, whilst it was felt that the play area at Windsor was a site for anti-social behaviour.

## Play Space Potential Sites Audit

This audit was commissioned by the Play and Leisure Partnership and considered areas either within settlement development limits or bordering on the limits. In particular, the audit focused on areas with little existing informal open space and on relatively flat ground with high concentrations of children. The audit identified the following priority areas:-

**Carrickfergus** - the extremities of the NE sector and Ashbourne/Brackenridge; Greenisland - Farm Lodge/Long Park; Whitehead - relatively well served, although some housing along the Islandmagee Road is distant from informal open space.

## Summary

Socio-economic analysis of the Borough indicates that play provision could be focussed particularly on the Eden, Clipperstown, Bluefield, Knockagh, Burleigh Hill and Woodburn wards, these having the greatest concentration of young people. The case for intervention can also be made for Northland and Sunnylands, both ranked in the top 10% most deprived wards in Northern Ireland.

Notably, enhanced play provision can help to improve each ward's living environment, potentially benefiting Clipperstown, Killycrot, and Love Lane which are ranked in the top 20% for living environment deprivation.

The following considerations are also noteworthy:-

- There are areas of deprivation which has implications for access to play facilities, play deprivation impacts negatively on a child's educational, emotional and physical development
- One fifth of the Borough's population are under 16; thus this strategy should cater for a significant proportion of the Borough's children and young people
- While there has been a decline in the number of people under 16 years old, between the 2001 and 2011, key target groups for this play strategy are projected to increase
- An increase of 1.55% in the number of people aged between 0 and 4 years by 2023
- There is a projected increase of 5.08% in the number of people aged between 5 and 9 by 2023
- Over one quarter of households live in relative poverty which may impact on ability to participate in play and leisure activity
- There is a lack of informal open space in some residential areas, restricting opportunity to engage in physical recreation in local communities
- Concerns exist around anti-social behaviour and lack of facilities for young people.





## 3.0 Setting the Strategic Context

This section of the strategy considers the regional and local policy environment in relation to play provision and how best the emerging Play strategy for the Carrickfergus Borough can assist in realising these objectives and policy priorities.

### Programme for Government 2011- 2015

The Programme for Government sets out the following priorities:-

#### Priority 1

Growing A Sustainable Economy  
And Investing In The Future

#### Priority 2

Creating Opportunities, Tackling  
Disadvantage And Improving Health  
And Wellbeing

#### Priority 3

Protecting Our People, The Environment  
And Creating Safer Communities

#### Priority 4

Building A Strong  
And Shared Community

#### Priority 5

Delivering High Quality  
And Efficient Public Services

The following policy commitments are of particular relevance/significance for the Carrickfergus Borough Play Strategy, namely to:-

- Deliver a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion
- Improve community safety by tackling anti-social behaviour
- Invest £7.8 million in programmes to tackle obesity
- Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015.

### OFMDFM Play and Leisure Implementation Plan

OFMDFM have set out a Play and Leisure Implementation Plan for Northern Ireland which outlines the Executive's commitment to children and young people's play and leisure needs and their right to engage in these activities. Core to this is promotion of cross sectoral working, recognising the strategic nature of play cross cuts many departmental agendas and remits.

The Implementation Plan aims to establish play within a framework which places high value on play as essential in the development of children's lives, families, communities and society and to improve current play and leisure provision for all children and young people. In pursuit of this, the plan identifies a number of actions which the Play strategy for the Carrickfergus Borough can seek to address, namely:-



- Raising public awareness about the benefits of play and leisure for children and young people;
- Improving the quality of, and enhancing access to, existing play and leisure services;
- Supporting the development of new innovations in play and leisure;
- Utilising public spaces for play and leisure.

Partnership working to jointly deliver key outcomes will be critical to the successful implementation of the play and leisure implementation plan.... The plan recognises that many stakeholders have played, and continue to play, a significant role in the realisation of play and leisure at a number of levels.

#### OFMDRM Play and Leisure Implementation Plan

The plan acknowledges the challenges which exist in relation to children and young people accessing play opportunities. This includes safety concerns, loss of open public space and under-investment. In terms of inclusion and cohesion, the plan identifies further barriers which the Carrickfergus strategy can seek to address in supporting the work of the PEACE III programme, namely:-

- A lack of tolerance and respect for children and young people in society
- A lack of access to, and conflicts over the use of local spaces and places for play and leisure, in both rural and urban areas
- Limited opportunities for inclusion and integration of children with disabilities or additional needs
- The limiting impact of poverty and other social conditions.

The underlying principles of the Implementation Plan will be shared by the Carrickfergus Play Strategy, namely:-

#### Accessibility

There should be sufficient provision of, and transport to and from, places and spaces for play and leisure to meet the needs of children and young people

#### Affordability

Costs associated with play and leisure should be affordable, enabling children and young people to access provision and opportunities

#### Flexibility

Service providers should be flexible in delivering play and leisure opportunities to meet the needs of children and young people based on their views

#### Diversity

Through play and leisure, children and young people should have access to a diverse range of people, places, spaces, opportunities and experiences

#### Integration

Play and leisure services and opportunities should support all children and young people to participate fully in building community cohesion

#### Inclusion

All children and young people irrespective of race, ethnic origin, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion or age should have an equal opportunity to be involved in play and leisure

#### Quality

All play and leisure activities and places should be fit for purpose and meet quality standards

#### Participation

All children and young people have the opportunity to participate actively in decisions that may affect their play and leisure

## Children and Young People's Strategy 2006 – 2016

The Strategy for Children and Young People 2006 – 2016 aims to ensure that children and young people are in a position to realise their potential by 2016. To do this, children will require support to reach their social and economic potential, and be supported by their local communities to do this. The strategy identifies work under the following themes to improve quality of life for children:-

- Health
- Enjoying, learning and achieving
- Living in safety and with stability
- Experiencing economic and environmental well-being
- Contributing positively to community and society
- Living in a society which respects their rights.

Provision of accessible, quality play opportunities across Carrickfergus will be integral to addressing the vision and objectives of the Children and Young People's strategy. It is recognised that this has an integral part to play in supporting children's development on both a physical and mental/emotional level. The play strategy can also contribute to the creation of safe and stable communities, a goal shared by the PEACE III programme and Carrickfergus Borough Council. This is particularly pertinent given community tensions which have arisen across the Borough in recent months, such as those in relation to the Union flag debate.

## Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Locality Planning Groups have been set up under the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships. As part of the Northern Outcomes Group, the Carrickfergus Children and Young People's Partnership Locality Planning Group seeks to develop Carrickfergus as a place where children and young people can realise their full potential at home, at school, at leisure and have the support to do this. The group has identified a number of priorities which the Play Strategy can contribute to, including working with young people aged 8-18 years, parents, young people with disabilities and keeping children safe and informed.

Additional areas of potential joint work include family support measures, increased volunteering among young people, development of community based activities for young people and ensuring inclusion of children and young people in more vulnerable groups, such as those with a disability or from ethnic minority backgrounds, and their families in planning and consultation.

Carrickfergus Locality Partnership Action Plan 2011-2014 identifies key themes which the Play Strategy can contribute to, including Whole Family Approach, Youth Mental Health, Anti-Social Behaviour and Disability.

## DHSSPS Fitter Future for All (2012-2022)

This framework addresses the need for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland and recognises that there are a number of factors in relation to tackling obesity and improving health outcomes, including:-

- Parental concerns about the safety of children, which have led to reductions in outdoor play and walking or cycling to school
- Television, computers and other forms of sedentary entertainment have largely replaced active play among children and teenagers

- Those with lower socio-economic status may tend to have lower participation in formal leisure-time physical activity; notably combined poor urban environments, limited safe play facilities and a lack of community safety which prevents them from making healthier lifestyle choices.

- Physical activity through the presence of green space not only reduces the risk of heart disease (by up to 50%), but also has a positive impact on stress, obesity and a general sense of wellbeing. It also cuts the risk of premature death (by 20-30%)
- Green spaces link directly to levels of physical activity. Children with more green space are less likely to be over-weight. Children in greener neighbourhoods have lower Body Mass Index.

DHSSPS Fitter Future for All  
(2012-2022)

The importance of green spaces is recognised in working to produce healthier outcomes. The framework highlights the importance of urban design and planning in delivering green infrastructure and play areas to increase physical activity.

The framework identifies a series of outcomes which the Play Strategy for Carrickfergus should be cognisant of, in addition to ensuring added value and complementarity:-

- All Early Years' settings deliver evidence-based initiatives and programmes in respect of nutrition, physical activity and play
- Increased opportunities for play, particularly in areas of deprivation so that children and families have access to safe facilities for play and physical activity in their locality, particularly in areas of deprivation
- A greater proportion of children and young people are achieving recommended levels of physical activity
- Children and young people can access opportunities and facilities for physical activity and play within their local community
- Children and young people have greater knowledge about recommended levels of physical activity and have more opportunities to participate.

The framework highlights the importance of both facilities for play and recreation and associated programmes to increase physical activity, leading to healthier outcomes.

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was developed in 1989 and is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights for children including, civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

It conveys recognition by world leaders that children and young people under 18 years old have human rights and often need special care and protection that adults do not. By agreeing to undertake the obligations of the Convention, signatory governments from across the world (known hereafter as the "Member States") have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children's rights and to hold themselves accountable for this commitment before the international community.



## Article 31 states:-

*“That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*

*“That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”*

A General Comment adopted in February 2013 seeks to raise the profile, awareness and understanding among Member States as to the centrality of Article 31 rights in the life and development of every child and to expand upon measures to ensure their implementation.

A full transcript of the General Comment is attached as an Appendix to this strategy (see Appendix 2)

## **DENI Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning**

This consultation framework recognises the value of inter-agency work in relation to child learning and development and identifies the following principle, which will underpin the planning and delivery of early years education and learning services and enhance collaborative working:-

- Children and their families are entitled to high quality, age appropriate early years education and learning services and opportunities – delivered in safe and inclusive environments, led by a skilled workforce, and evaluated against quality standards where the importance of play in its own right, and as a pedagogical tool is recognised.

This highlights the role which the Play Strategy for Carrickfergus can occupy in supporting DENI achieve its objectives, recognising the intellectual and educational benefits of play for (young) children and the value of inter-agency co-operation.

Collaborative working among the statutory, voluntary, and other relevant sectors and professional bodies will play an important part in securing improved outcomes for young children in their early years.

## **DENI Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning**

## **OFMDFM Childcare Strategy**

Currently in development, the consultation document informing this strategy proposal seeks to identify key childcare needs and consider how best these should be addressed. The NI Executive, in partnership with other Government Departments, has set aside an additional £12 million over four years to support the development of the Childcare Strategy. It has a vision of childcare provision which meets the needs of children and parents and leads to better outcomes. The cross-cutting nature of childcare is also recognised in that it will be aligned with the primary focus of the Programme for Government which is “to grow the economy and tackle disadvantage.” In addition, it will contribute the Anti-Poverty agenda, the draft Strategy to Improve the Lives of Disabled People 2012-15, the Child Poverty Strategy and the Children and Young People’s Strategy.

The overall aim of the Strategy will be to promote the availability of good quality, accessible, integrated and affordable childcare provision that is sustainable in the long-term and which will:

- Support the development of children and young people and enable children and young people from the most deprived backgrounds to avail of life opportunities
- Support increased parental participation in the workforce, thereby making a significant impact on the economy, families and communities
- Support learning and development activity which will improve opportunities for employment.

Six key policy principles have been proposed to underpin the development of the Childcare Strategy, namely:-

- 1 Affordability
- 2 Accessibility
- 3 Sustainability
- 4 An integrated approach
- 5 Quality
- 6 Informed parental choice.

These align with the goals of the Play Strategy for Carrickfergus, highlighting the cross-sectoral nature of play provision, physical and programmatic.



## Carrickfergus Borough Council Corporate Plan 2011-2015

Carrickfergus Borough Council has adopted a five year Corporate Plan in order to provide a framework for the delivery of its services and its development agenda.

The Corporate Plan confirms the vision for the Council area as:

*'The Borough of Carrickfergus will be a vibrant, healthy and prosperous place with an excellent quality of life for all to live, work and invest in'*

The Councils vision will be delivered through five strategic themes as follows:

**1 Civic Leadership and Governance -** building on the civic pride that we enjoy within the Borough.

**2 Health, Leisure and Wellbeing -** seeking to promote co-operation between Council and those involved in community activities.

**3 Sustainable Environment and Communities -** ensuring that we all enjoy the benefits of a clean, healthy lifestyle within safe and supportive communities.

**4 Economic Development, Tourism and Prosperity -** building a prosperous future with our business community and attracting new economic opportunities.

**5 Corporate Service Delivery -** ensuring that we are an effective, fit for purpose organisation to enable effective service delivery.



## Carrickfergus Play and Leisure Action Plan 2011 – 2016

Development of a Play Strategy is in keeping with the aims and timescales set out in the Council's Play and Leisure Action Plan. In particular, the commitment made by the Play Partnership to "nurture the development of a culture of dialogue with children and young people" provides opportunity for direct participation by the target group, ensuring that the emerging strategy is grounded in local need and remains user-led.

Key areas identified in the Play and Leisure Action Plan will be fundamental to the Play strategy, in particular:-

- Work to reduce inter-generational tensions
- Consultation with youth forum
- Partnership working by stakeholders
- Accessible provision, including for children with disabilities.

Progress to date has been highly encouraging: the six month progress report, up to and including September 2012, found that the target of twelve events in Council Parks to encourage use of the outdoor space had been exceeded with 29 events held.

This Play Strategy seeks to build on the progress made and actions identified through the Action Plan, to ensure consistency and continuity.

## Carrickfergus Borough Sustainable Development Audit and Action Plan-September 2010

This audit was developed in recognition of the statutory duty of local authorities in relation to sustainable development. This requires councils to "act in the way it considers best calculated to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland, except to the extent that it considers that any such action is not reasonably practicable in all the circumstances of the case" (Northern Ireland Act 2006).

The action plan for Carrickfergus recognises the key objectives set out in the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy, namely to:-

- Conserve our landscape and manage it in a more sustainable way
- Protect and enhance the freshwater and marine environment
- Improve our air quality
- Conserve, protect, enhance and sustainably re-use our historic environment
- Protect and enhance biodiversity.



It also references the nine key principles underpinning the work of Carrickfergus Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Services:-

**1 Parks to be Proud of** - improving the quality of the Borough's green space through current and future investment

**2 Bringing the Parks to Life** - making our parks open and accessible to all user groups

**3 A Partnership with the Community** - encouraging a sense of ownership through our 'community involvement scheme'

**4 Parks with a Presence** - maintaining a staff presence in parks and giving each park a clear identity

**5 The Healthy Living Centre** - ensuring that our green space contributes significantly towards the improvement of health for all who live, visit and work in the Borough

**6 A Safe Environment for All** - improving safety in parks and reducing antisocial behaviour and the fear it causes

**7 Promoting Sustainability** - contributing to Council's objectives in sustainability, bio-diversity and the promotion of Local Agenda 21

**8 Urban Regeneration and Social Renewal** - Establish green space provision as a core element in the Borough's programme of social and economic regeneration and urban renewal

**9 Citizenship** - encouraging Citizens to view their gardens as extensions of the Borough's green space.

This sets a framework for the Play Strategy, seeking to utilise green space for use by children, young people and the wider community, as well as recognising the associated health, environmental and educational benefits for all. Safety is a key concern for play provision, in addition to accessibility of provision and sustaining our environment through careful management combined with education and regeneration.

### **Carrickfergus Borough Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan**

Council and the Play and Leisure Partnership recognises the cross cutting nature of play and leisure, impacting across a range of Council agendas. This includes Good Relations, recognising the potential of play to impact positively at local community level, building inter and intra community relations and fostering inter-generational linkages.

As a result, those actions where Good Relations and the Play and Leisure Strategy can complement each other in relation to provision of safe, welcoming and accessible facilities and development of capacity.

The aim of Good Relations within Carrickfergus Borough Council highlights this potential, namely:-

*"To actively promote and engage with all communities to improve good relations in the Borough whilst at all times respecting difference and valuing partnerships with other service providers."*

It recognises the partnership approach and benefits which jointly working together can bring; the Play and Leisure Partnership and Strategy will be able to impact key areas including engagement with education stakeholders, local leadership, working to redress tensions, which can develop into anti-social behaviour, and creating a safe and welcoming environment.

## **Carrickfergus Borough Physical Activity and Sport Development Action Plan 2013-2015**

The strategy and accompanying action plan shares many of the same goals as the Play Strategy, in particular to health and well-being, accessibility and supporting communities. It also recognises the importance and value of partnership working, seeking to ensure a coordinated approach to provision. Central to this is outreach into communities to maximise participation across all age groups. Scope exists to develop synergies with Play across a range of action areas, including:-

- Pre-school activity
- After schools provision
- Special needs provision
- Health and well-being initiatives
- Work with/in disadvantaged groups/areas.

### **Review of Public Administration**

The Review of Public Administration (RPA) was launched by the Executive in June 2002 with the remit of reviewing the arrangements for the accountability, development, administration and delivery of public services in Northern Ireland.

The reform of local government will see the reduction of 26 councils to 11 by April 2015. The formalisation of Statutory Transition Committees (STCs) in August 2013 and the subsequent election of shadow Councils in May 2014 highlights the importance of this strategy positioning play and leisure at the core of community planning.

Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne Borough Councils will merge under RPA to form a new Mid and East Antrim local authority. It is envisaged that these new councils will be stronger, more efficient and deliver more effective services. They will be citizen focused, responding to the needs, aspirations and concerns of their communities.

Powers will transfer to local authorities in planning, roads, urban regeneration, community development, housing, local economic development and local tourism. The transfer will also include some elements of the delivery of the EU Rural Development Programme and greater involvement of local government in local sports decisions.

It is further proposed that Councils will have a new statutory duty of Community Planning which will provide a framework within which Councils, departments, statutory bodies and other relevant agencies and sectors can work together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area based on effective engagement with the community.

Ensuring that the play agenda and the play and leisure needs of children and young people are heard through the community planning process will be essential, highlighting a key action area for the Play Partnership.

### **CAN Cluster PEACE III Action Plan**

Phase 2 of the CAN PEACE III Programme consists of the cross-cutting theme to Invest in Relationships for Peace Building through three core priorities, namely:-

- Investing in Leadership for a Share Society
- Investing in Cohesion and Integration
- Investing in Families and Young People.

Development of a play policy for Carrickfergus Borough Council has the potential to impact across these priorities, particularly in terms of supporting cohesion and integration and investing in families and young people through provision of high quality, accessible play facilities.

It provides opportunity to develop shared space in the form of play and leisure facilities, in addition to developing a series of animation programmes/activities which will encourage use of the shared space and develop a culture of accessing it.



## Child Poverty Strategy 2011

The Child Poverty Strategy aims to:

provide the opportunity for all our children and young people to thrive and to address the causes and consequences of disadvantage.

The strategy recognises that addressing child poverty is a long-term issue and sets out a number of action areas where the Carrickfergus Play Partnership and Strategy, in particular, can contribute, namely:-

- To promote affordable, accessible play and leisure provision for all children and young people
- To provide different learning environments through youth services which complement formal learning and are focused on the personal and social development of children and young people
- To improve opportunities for low income families to participate in arts, cultural, sporting and leisure activities.



## Planning NI

Planning Policy Statements form a key part of the NI land-use planning system, setting out the main planning considerations that will be taken into account in assessing proposals for various forms of development. The role of Planning NI will be essential in ensuring provision of informal open space in residential developments, providing residents with access to play facilities within their local communities. This seeks to address earlier developments where less consideration was given to open space, thus creating a scarcity of provision in some areas. Key to addressing this will be ongoing liaison with Planning NI personnel to ensure the following (PPS) are adhered to.

### PP7, Quality Residential Environments

PPS 7 deals with residential environments and considers issues relating to play provision as follows:-

- Play facilities are seen as part of local neighbourhood facilities and, where they are required, should be incorporated into the overall design and layout of the development, designed to a high standard and located to provide focal points and landmark features whilst respecting the amenities of proposed and existing housing
- It is considered reasonable to expect that developers will contribute to the cost of provision of necessary facilities and/or set land aside for development and use by the local community
- Regard should always be given to ways of integrating pleasant, attractive and landscaped areas of public open space, including children's play-spaces, as an intrinsic element of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development.

## PPS 8, Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

PPS 8 develops some of the strategic guidelines included in PPS 7. Its Policy OS 2 states:

*“For residential development of 100 units or more, or for development sites of 5 hectares or more, an equipped children’s play area will be required as an integral part of the development. The Department will consider an exception to this requirement where an equipped children’s play area exists within reasonable walking distance (generally around 400 metres) of the majority of the units within the development scheme.”*

PPS 8 (paragraph 5.14) re-emphasises the importance within new housing developments of the provision of safe opportunities for children’s play. It stresses the need for children’s play areas and facilities to be located within a reasonable walking distance of where they live whilst not being located so close to dwellings as to cause noise or nuisance problems for residents.

PPS 8 also refers to Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) recommendation of a minimum standard for ‘outdoor playing space’ of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. This is commonly referred to as the ‘Six Acre Standard’. Included within those 2.4 hectares should be dedicated children’s playing space of 0.8 hectares, to incorporate:-

- Designated areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focussed opportunities for outdoor play
- Casual or informal playing space within housing areas.

## Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-2019

This Strategy sets out a new shared sporting vision of “a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport”, as well as the key strategic priorities for sport and physical recreation, and informs the direction of future investment – underpinning three areas: participation, performance and places.

Using this framework, and led by the Minister responsible for sport and physical recreation, Government will:-

- Promote the value, importance and priority of sport and physical recreation
- Promote increased participation in sport and physical recreation among under-represented groups
- Promote community cohesion through sport and physical recreation.

This Play Strategy for Carrickfergus Borough recognises the importance of providing accessible recreation and play opportunities, particularly for those children identified as being most at risk. Through an integrated series of actions it seeks to ensure that children and young people, their families, carers and communities are supported to engage in physical recreation through play facilities and programmes which seek to increase access and foster positive local relations.



### **Too Young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 Year Olds in Northern Ireland - Community Relations Council, 2002**

This study of the attitudes and prejudices of pre-school children was funded by the Community Relations Council (CRC) in association with Channel 4 Television. It draws upon the findings from interviews with a representative sample of 352 children drawn from across Northern Ireland.

Amongst the findings was the fact that just over half (51%) of all three year olds were able to demonstrate some awareness of the cultural/political significance of at least one event or symbol. The figure among six-year-olds was significantly higher at 90%. On the basis of its findings, the report recommends three education policy initiatives to address these early negative influences:-

- Children, from the age of three, should be encouraged to explore and experience a range of different cultural practices, events and symbols and to appreciate and respect difference and cultural diversity
- From about the age of five onwards, children should be encouraged to understand the negative effects of sectarian stereotypes and prejudices and to be able to identify them in their own attitudes, where appropriate
- For such strategies to be successful, nurseries and schools need to find ways of engaging and working closely with parents and the local community and, where appropriate, connecting with community relations and cultural diversity initiatives in the wider community.

It is clear, therefore, that interventions such as those proposed through play strategies represent an important opportunity to work with young children, their parents and carers to forge respect for different traditions and cultures, encouraging tolerance and celebrating diversity. Of particular importance will be peace building work with play workers which will leave a pool of skills post intervention, ensuring a legacy for Carrickfergus Borough beyond the PEACE III programme.

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Such is the essential nature of play to child development that it has been recognised by the United Nations as a right of every child. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out internationally agreed standards relating to children's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. These include:

- The rights of a child to minimum standards of health, social security, physical care, family life, play and recreation, culture and leisure, as well as adequate standards of living and a good quality education.

**Play and recreation are essential to the health and well-being of children... They contribute to all aspects of living."**

#### **UN Convention**

In particular, Article 31 sets out the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. It highlights the many benefits generated by play, including development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, physical and emotional strength.

Denying children the opportunity to engage in play activities can present a range of issues and challenges, some of which have been identified by Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) (Best Play, 2000):-

- Poorer ability in motor tasks
- Lower levels of physical activity
- Poorer ability to deal with stressful or traumatic situations and events
- Poorer ability to assess and manage risk
- Poorer social skills, leading to difficulties in negotiating social situations such as dealing with conflict and cultural difference

Lack of play opportunities can also bring about loss in self-confidence, self-identity, concentration and independence in children. In addition, opportunities for social interaction at both family and wider community level can impact on community cohesion, with reduced opportunity for meeting new people and forming relationships. Play provides opportunities for children to develop their sense of self-identity and self-esteem, to empathise with others and increase awareness of the consequences of their actions. This in turn can contribute to reducing incidences of anti-social behaviour in later years, play creating an appealing diversion to such behaviours from an early age.

“Play provision can also make a significant contribution to fostering a positive attitude to cultural diversity”.

**Fields in Trust**

The Carrickfergus Borough Play Strategy can seek to address this through provision of play opportunities which can create an environment to nurture and develop children to the benefit of themselves, their family, carers and wider community. It will clearly contribute to building positive relationships at the local level and forge more cohesive communities through increased opportunities for interaction and use of shared space by children, families and their wider communities.

### Summary

It is clear that the policy environment is fully supportive of the need for local authorities to develop a Play Strategy, cognisant of the impact this can have on children’s welfare and development, with the wider community and health benefits which can also be generated. At the local level, the Play Strategy will be developed by Carrickfergus Borough Council in close conjunction with key stakeholders including children and young people, presenting a vital opportunity for stakeholders to come together to develop a sustainable legacy for play across the Borough.

The strategy will seek towards forging stable community relations through provision of facilities and activities which engage communities in a safe and shared environment.



## 4.0 The Strategy Development Process and Feedback

The strategic development process undertaken for the Carrickfergus Play strategy was underpinned by the following core values:

### **Robustness**

is the strategy based on real and evidenced need?

### **Effectiveness**

will the strategy achieve its intended benefits?

### **Efficiency**

will the play strategy provide maximum benefit from available resources?

### **Accessibility**

is play provision accessible to those who need it?

### **Sustainability**

will play provision be maintained in the future?

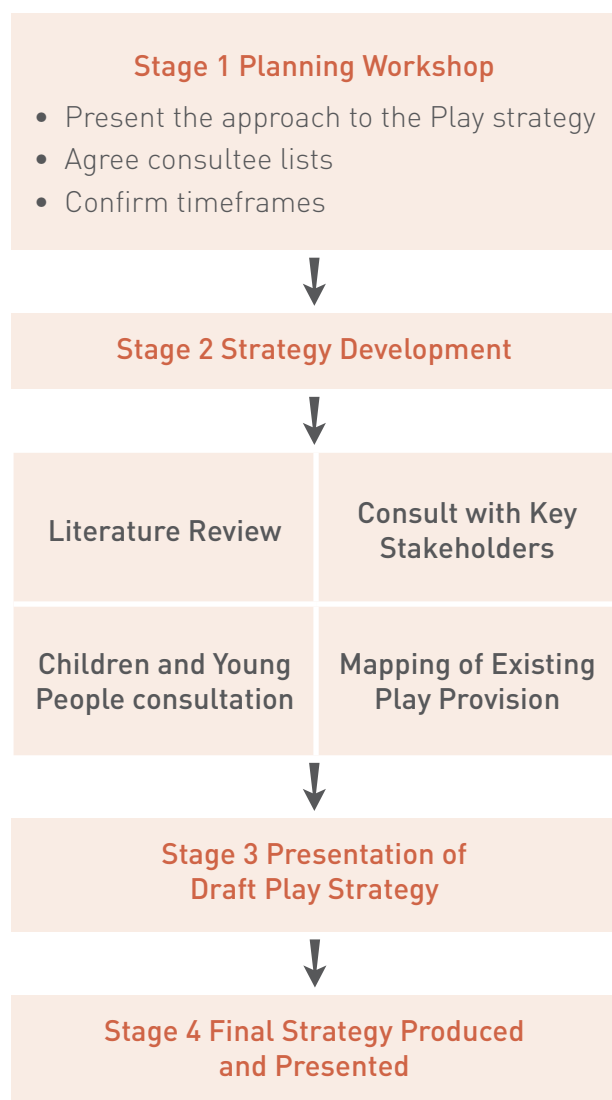


In order to achieve these values the play strategy must be:-

- Based on a thorough understanding of the needs of children and young people across the Borough
- Meaningful to the residents, members and staff of the Carrickfergus Borough Council area, particularly children and young people
- Recognised and respected by the statutory, voluntary and community organisations across Carrickfergus and beyond with a play role/remit.

## Strategy Development Process

To develop a strategy in keeping with the values and aspirations outlined above, the following strategic development process was employed:-



**This process ensured that the emerging strategy was:-**

- Grounded in evidenced need as informed by children, young people and stakeholders
- Responsive to the wider strategic and policy environment
- Clearly focused on outcomes around accessible quality play provision, inclusion and participation.

**The strategy development process was informed by:-**

- Strategic planning workshops with Carrickfergus Borough Council Play team
- Consultation with children and young people
- Consultation with key stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary sectors
- Consultation with OFMDFM
- Review of local and regional strategic environment.

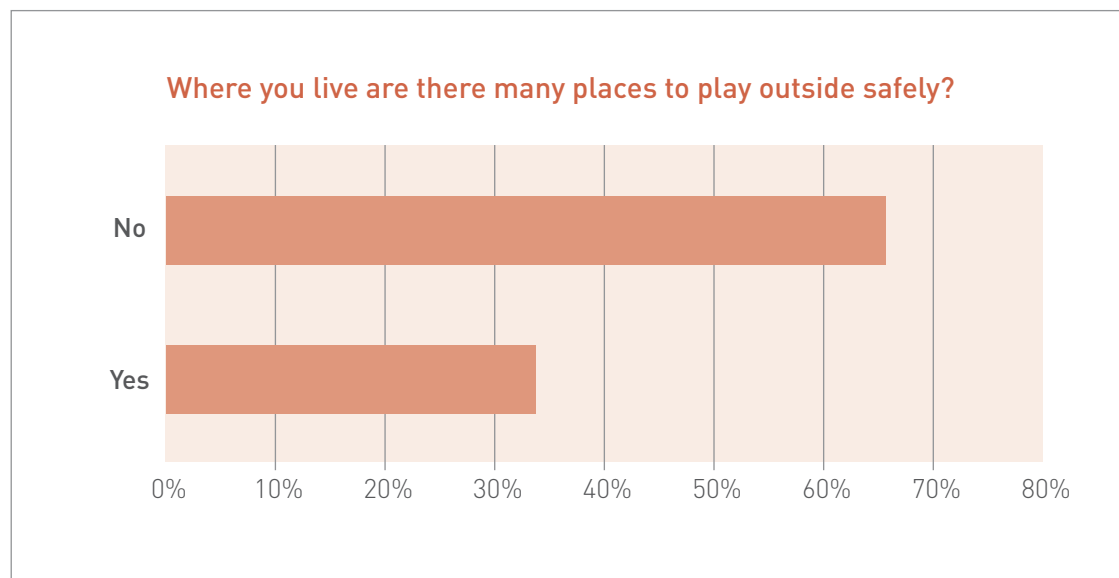
**The strategy development process also took into consideration the outcomes laid out in the OFMDFM Play and Leisure Implementation Plan, namely:-**

- Children and Young People have appropriate access to places and spaces for play and leisure
- Play and leisure policy implemented at government and local level
- Children and young people are able to access play and leisure facilities in their local area
- Skilled and qualified workforce within the play and leisure sector.

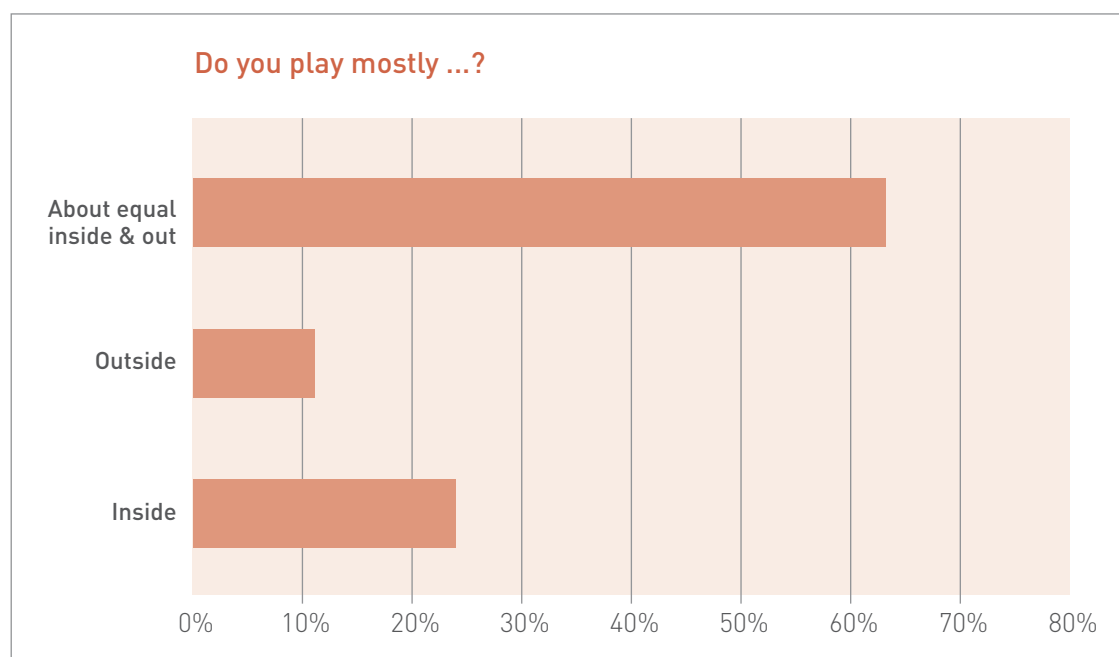
## Children and Young People's Survey

A survey was undertaken across a sample of 123 children and young people to identify how best play provision should be developed and the type of play provision required by beneficiaries. Most survey respondents were aged 12 and under and from Carrickfergus. Key survey findings are presented as follows:-

### Safe Places to Play



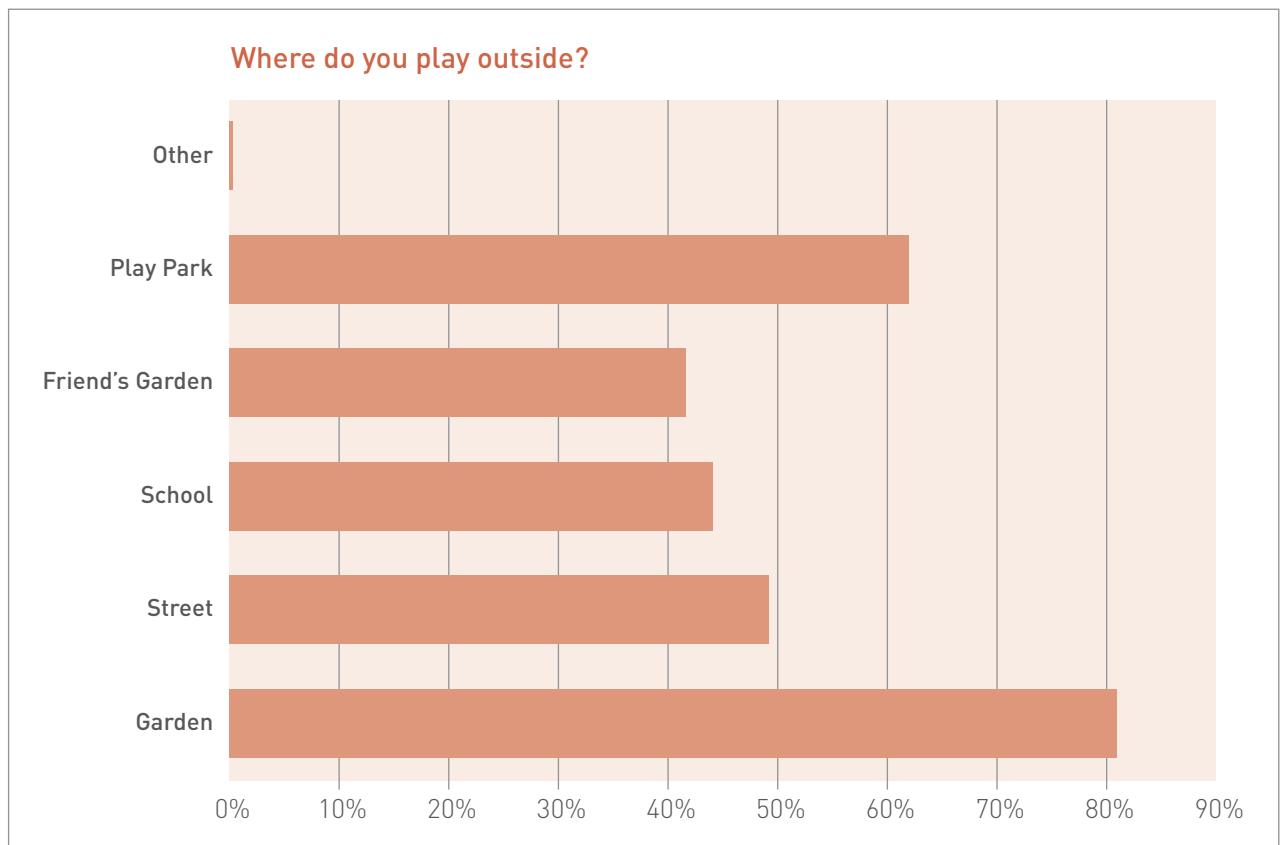
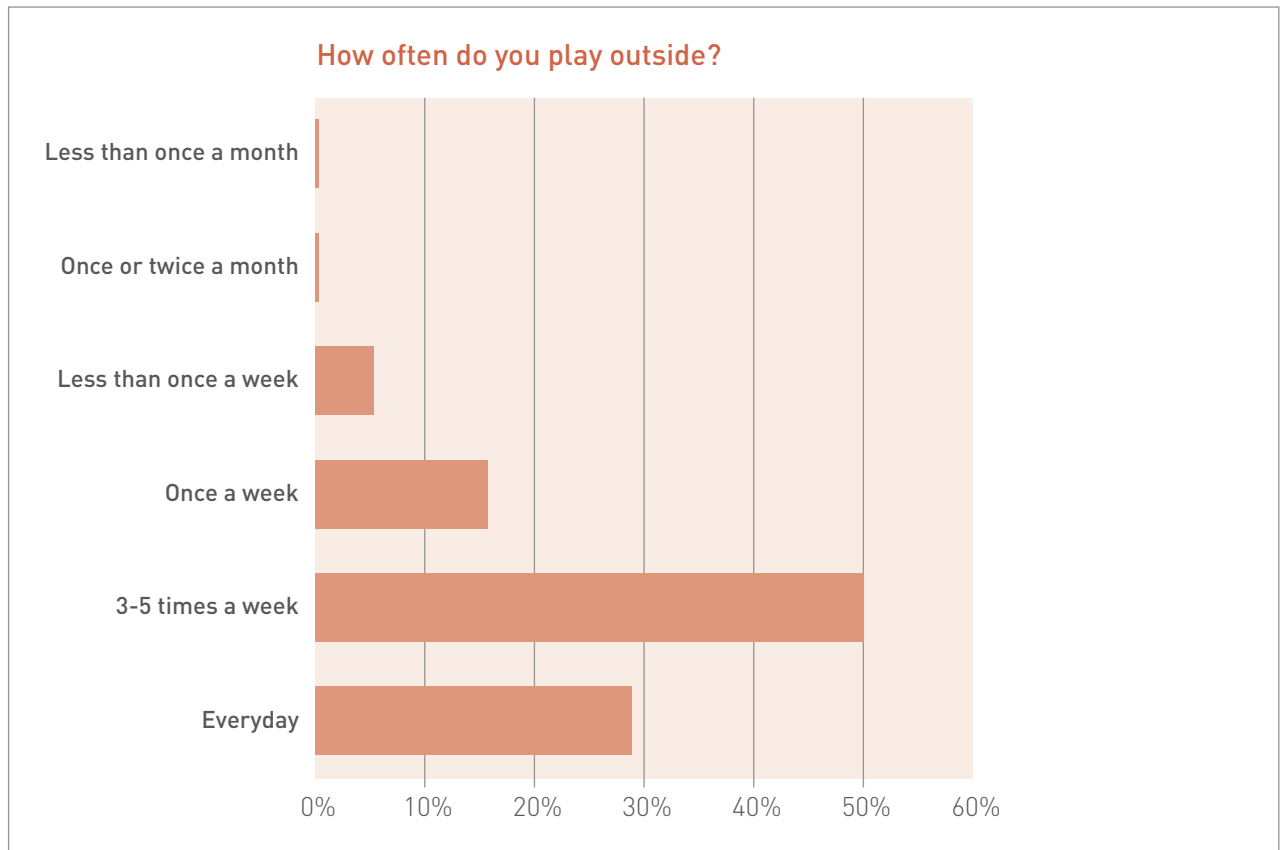
Over two thirds of children stated that there are not many places to play outside safely in their area. One quarter of children play mostly inside, with the majority reporting that they play about equally inside and outside:-

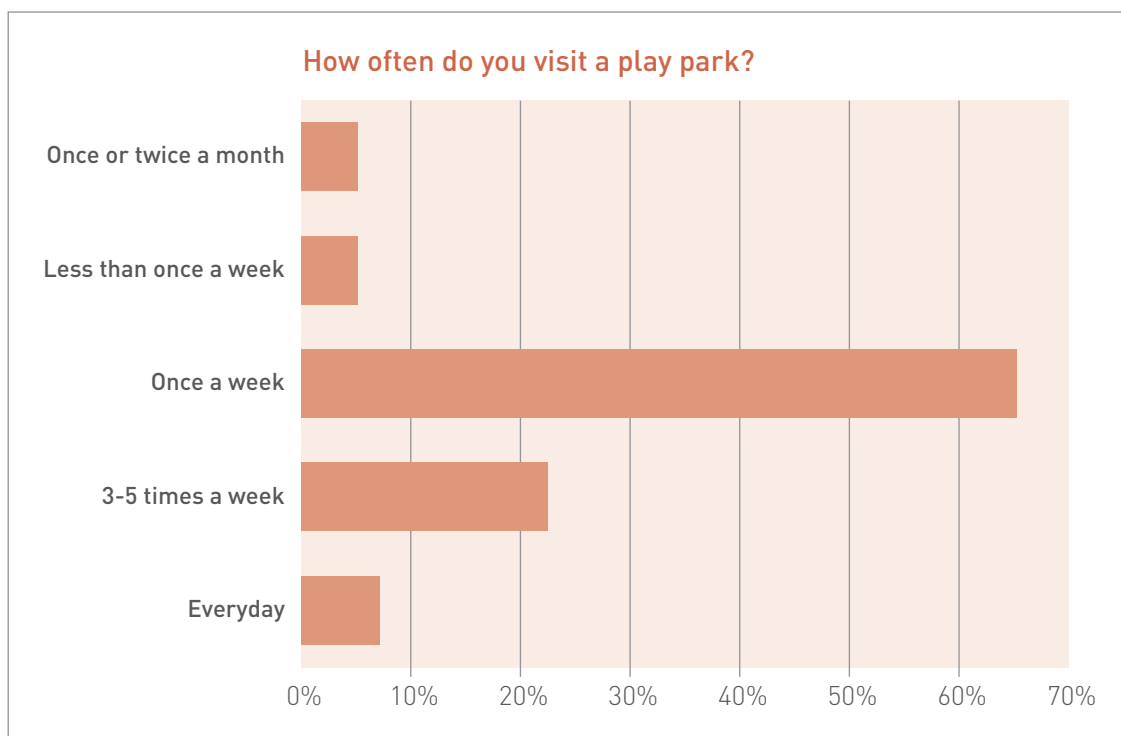




## Playing Outside

Outdoor play is a frequent occurrence as evidenced below:-

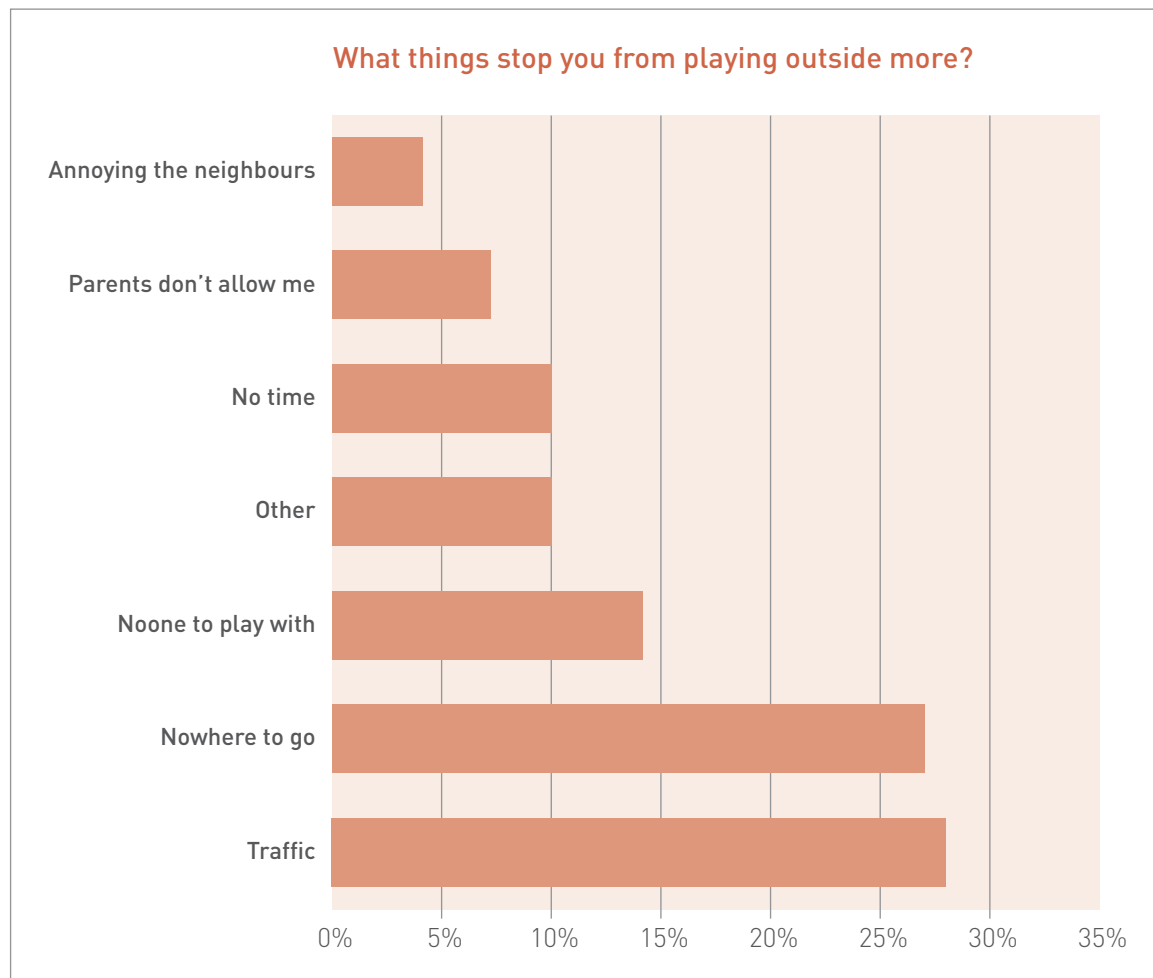




Almost half of the respondents reported that they play outside for one to two hours, with the garden being the most common location. An overwhelming majority (88.5%) stated that they would like to play outside more often, indicating that there is still significant scope to address the play needs of the Borough's younger citizens. Just under two thirds (64%) stated that they visit a play park once a week.

## Barriers to Play

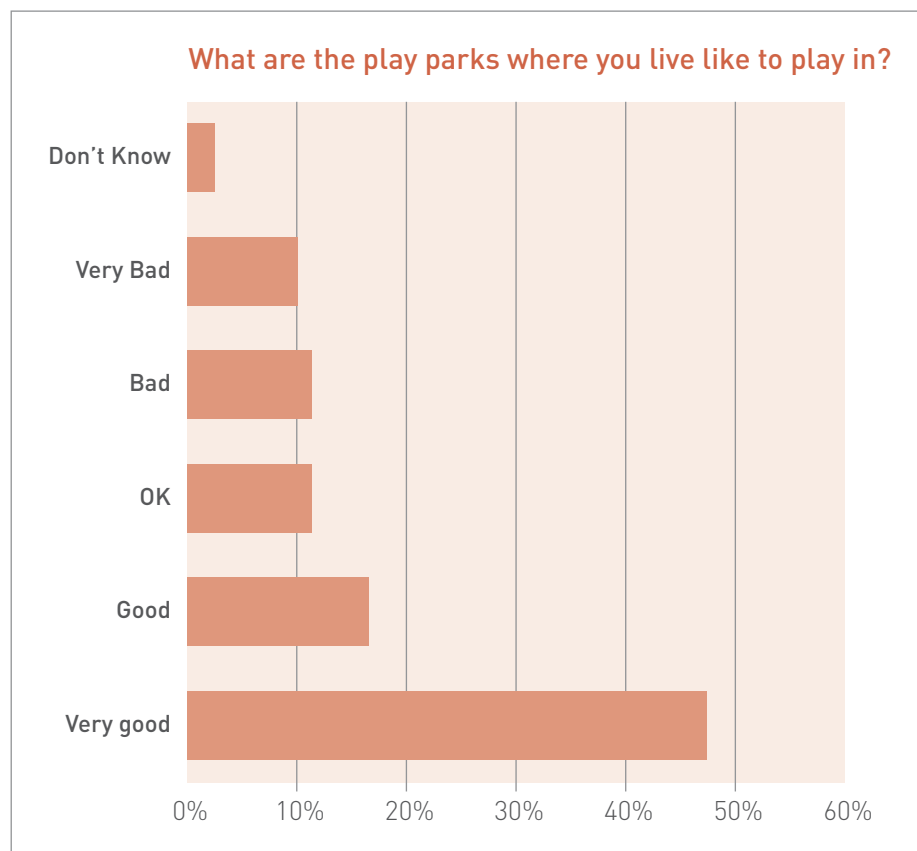
A range of barriers to play were identified as evidenced by the following:-



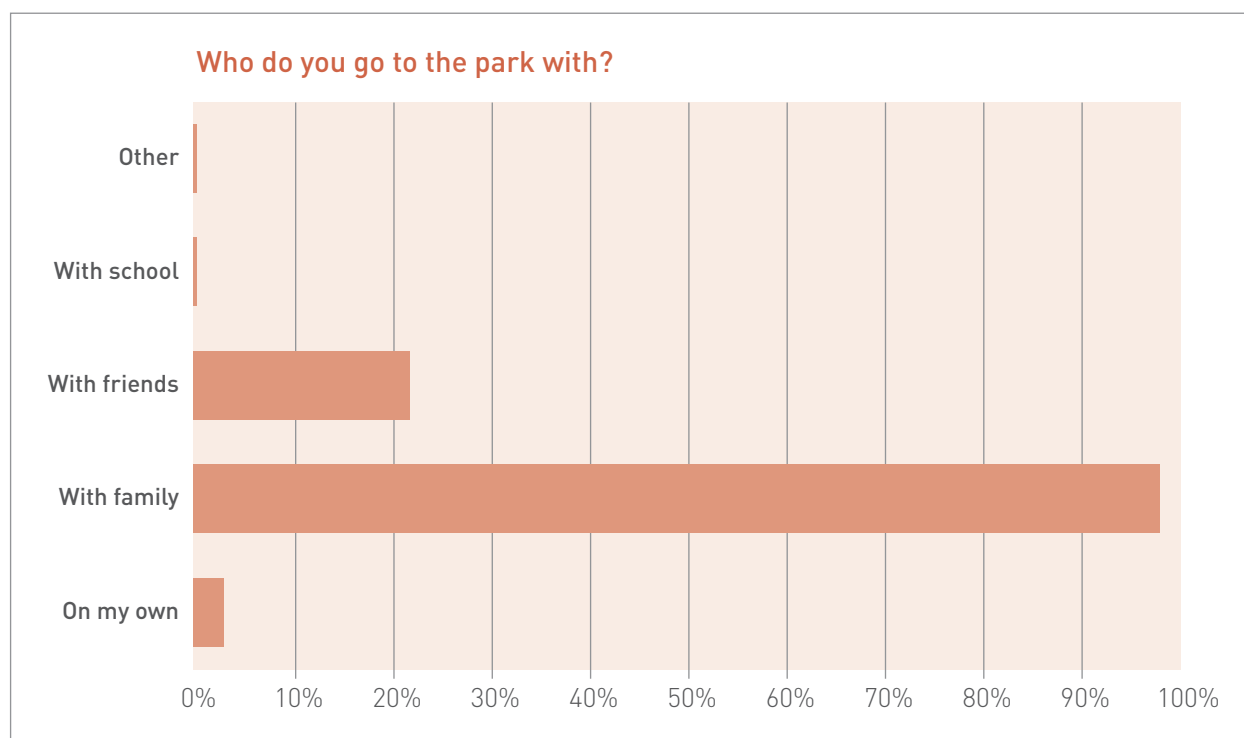
While traffic concerns are obviously a challenge beyond the remit of Council and requires action from other stakeholders. Tackling the problem of “nowhere to go” has greater potential and presents opportunity to develop actions around promotion, education and awareness raising of play parks which could be supported by animation programmes to encourage greater use of the parks. Other concerns highlighted the weather; again outside the control of Council but highlights the need for indoor provision as well as outdoor.

## Views on Play Parks

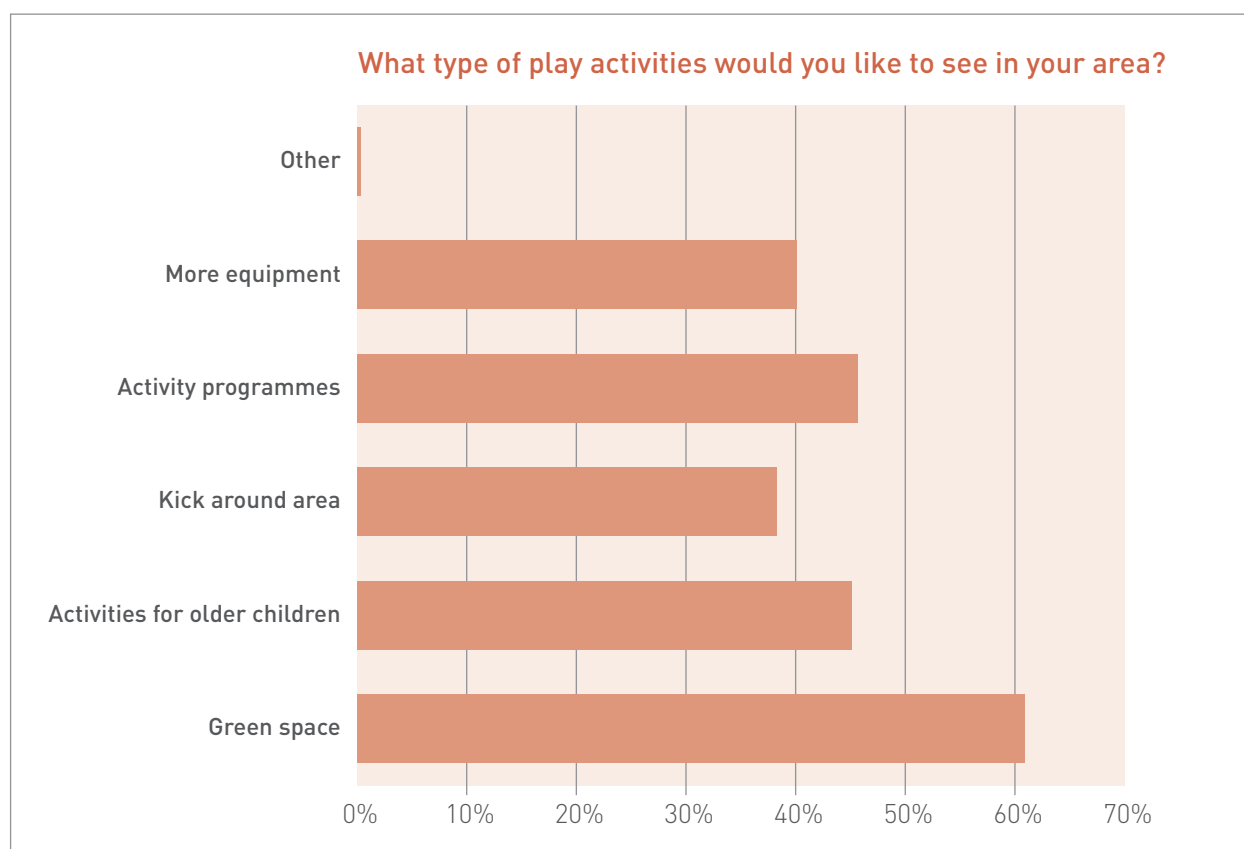
A healthy level of support was recorded for the play parks, with 47% stating that play parks where they live are “very good”.



In developing programmes/activities to encourage greater use of the play parks, Council must focus on developing family based activities as this is clearly the most significant user base. No respondents reported visiting parks with schools; this may present opportunity for Council to explore joint programmes with schools.



In developing parks in the future, the following presents Council with a range of factors to consider:-



In terms of the equipment which children wanted to see, this is ranked as follows:-

- Parks similar to those in Carrickfergus town (cited by respondents residing outside the town)
- Up to date equipment
- Clean environment (concerns about dog fouling).

## Summary

These findings are used to develop a set of strategic themes and associated actions which will direct Council and the Play Partnership over the next three years. This approach will ensure an evidence based model, tailored to the needs of the Borough and its citizens.

The findings also created the Carrickfergus Borough Children's Charter – Appendix 3. This Charter summarised Carrickfergus Borough Council's pledge to the children and young people of the Borough. It aims to work with children, parents and the local community to ensure that play spaces and activities within the Borough are planned in a way that ensures all children, of all ages and abilities, can participate, learn and build new friendships in a positive and supportive way.



## 5.0 The Strategic Themes and Action Plan

The play strategy for Carrickfergus will focus on key themes and actions which can be achieved within the 2013 – 2016 timeframe. The strategic themes are based on identified need, in addition to complementing the wider strategic environment, principally the OFMDFM Play and Leisure Implementation plan and the Children and Young People's strategy. The strategy developed for the Carrickfergus Play Partnership is based on the following mission statement:

### Mission Statement and Aims

The Partnership will ensure that play environments and experiences across Carrickfergus Borough are strategically planned and co-ordinated to provide accessible and inclusive play which supports children and young people to reach their physical and emotional potential

The Mission Statement is supported by the following aims:-

- Play will be on agenda where it has the potential to contribute to positive outcomes for the people of the Borough including health and wellbeing, community cohesion, community safety and community regeneration
- To ensure that all decision making in relation to play is evidence based and ensures that investment is focused where need has been identified
- Investment in Play will seek to provide places and spaces for play and will support the animation of these spaces
- Awareness of the positive physical and emotional benefits of play will be raised with decision makers, play professionals, parents and guardians
- Additional external resources will be sought for investment in Play through the Play Strategy.





Through the strategic development consultation process outlined to date, the following themes were prioritised as those on which Council would take action:-

- Places and Spaces for Play
- Community Cohesion and Inclusion
- Animation Programmes
- Awareness and Outreach.

The following objectives have been drawn up under each theme:-

### Strategic Theme – Places and Spaces for Play

- Audit of play facilities and potential play space
- To raise awareness of play facilities across the Borough
- To provide a range of high quality accessible play facilities for the Borough's citizens
- To maximise use of the area's play facilities
- Support efforts to enhance green spaces to promote quality play opportunities.



### Strategic Theme – Community Cohesion and Inclusion

- Recognising the role of play in contributing to stable and sustainable community relations
- Ensure that vulnerable children and young people are supported in their play
- Increase participation in play and use of play resources in areas with low community infrastructure
- To ensure that all children and young people across the Borough have opportunity to access and benefit from shared play and leisure opportunities
- Support inter-generational working.

### Strategic Theme – Animation programmes

- To increase use of play facilities and participation in play and recreation
- Increase physical activity among children and young people
- Development of family based/ inter-generational activities at play parks
- Encourage use of shared space by older children and young people
- Work with local residents/communities to enhance green spaces to promote opportunity for quality play.

### Strategic Theme – Awareness and Outreach

- Support and promote work of the Play Partnership
- Promote play, benefits of play and practical opportunities
- Ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to play at Borough level
- Ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to play under the new “super council” structure.

# ACTION PLANS

# ACTION PLAN A

## PLACES and SPACES for PLAY

<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Implementation of Action Plan A will bring about the following outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play places and spaces will be available for children and young people across the Borough</li> <li>• Investment in play space will be evidence led</li> <li>• Key decision makers will be aware of the benefits of investing in play and its potential to contribute to their aims and objectives</li> </ul>			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>A.1 Audit of play facilities and potential play space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play audit completed, including mapping of play facilities against demographics</li> <li>• Identification of unused/ vacant space Consider how best such space could be utilised, including legal and financial implications and community engagement</li> <li>• Explore funding opportunities for any identified gaps in provision</li> <li>• Activity programme developed for areas where gaps in provision are identified</li> </ul>	Year 1	CBC	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Childcare strategy
<b>A.2 To raise awareness of play facilities across the Borough</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database of play provision shared with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Online presence – Council website; social media</li> <li>• Open/fun days at play areas</li> <li>• Annual programme of events at play facilities</li> </ul>	Year 1 ongoing	Play Partnership	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>A.3 To provide a range of high quality accessible play space and facilities for the Borough's citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of high quality, accessible space and facilities</li> <li>• Liaison with Planning NI to ensure adherence to PPS 8</li> <li>• Liaison with landowners/ developers in relation to securing open spaces in advance of any future residential developments</li> <li>• Regular maintenance of play facilities</li> <li>• Monitor changes and developments to play spaces</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CBC	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Prog for Cohesion, Integration and Sharing;  PPS8
<b>A.4 To maximise use of the area's play facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop age appropriate activity programmes to encourage participation by both children and young people</li> <li>• Family Fun Days</li> <li>• Target schools, youth clubs, play groups, etc</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CBC	CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Physical Activity and Sports Development strategy
<b>A.5 Support efforts to enhance green spaces to promote quality play opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity based play and leisure</li> <li>• Growing Together initiative</li> <li>• Estate based allotments</li> <li>• Environmental programmes</li> <li>• Nature trail</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CBC	Fitter Future for All;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Physical Activity and Sports Development strategy

# ACTION PLAN B

## COMMUNITY COHESION and INCLUSION

<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Implementation of Action Plan B will bring about the following outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play space will be neutral and will provide a safe and shared environment for cross community contact</li> <li>• Play (space and programmes) will act as a tool for inclusion for children and families coping with physical and emotional health and wellbeing challenges</li> </ul>			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>B.1 Recognising the role of play in contributing to stable and sustainable community relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing cross community and community cohesion programmes to establish play areas as shared spaces across the Borough</li> </ul>	Year 2	Play Partnership	Programme for Cohesion, Integration and Sharing
<b>B.2 Ensure that vulnerable children and young people are supported in their play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of accessible play facilities and programmes which reach to those most at risk, including children with disabilities</li> <li>• Identify key issues reducing accessibility play</li> <li>• Training on inclusive play</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CBC	Children and Young People's strategy;  Play and Leisure Implementation plan
<b>B.3 Increase participation in play and use of play resources in areas with low community infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with local communities on their needs</li> <li>• Develop tailored programme of activity to increase participation</li> <li>• Training for play workers on inclusion and peace building</li> </ul>	Year 2 ongoing	Play Partnership	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Physical Activity and Sports Development strategy

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>B.4 To ensure that all children and young people across the Borough have opportunity to access and benefit from shared play and leisure opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with all schools to develop joint programmes where children come together to use play areas as shared spaces</li> </ul>	Year 2	Play Partnership	Programme for Cohesion, Integration and Sharing;  CAN PEACE III
<b>B.5 Support inter-generational working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure partners are committed to inter-generational working</li> <li>• Agree single approach in dealing with Play related complaints</li> <li>• Inter-generational play activities such as gardening, nature projects</li> </ul>	Year 2	Play Partnership	Children and Young People's strategy

# ACTION PLAN C

## ANIMATION PROGRAMMES

<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Implementation of Action Plan C will bring about the following outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased use of play facilities</li> <li>Improved health and wellbeing of children and young people through</li> <li>Increased physical activity</li> <li>Development of inter-generational activities which will encourage and sustain family use</li> </ul>			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>C.1 To increase use of play facilities and participation in play and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with key stakeholders to develop programmes using shared spaces – schools, Youth Service, Sure Start</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Play Partnership	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Learning to Learn
<b>C.2 Increase physical activity among children and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual programme of physical activity activities developed and promoted</li> </ul>	Annually	Play Partnership	Children and Young People's strategy;  Fitter Future for All
<b>C.3 Development of family based/ inter-generational activities at play parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of age appropriate programmes which encourage use of outdoor play areas and establish them as family friendly environments e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fun Days</li> <li>Growing Clubs/ Growing Together</li> <li>Nature Trails</li> <li>Develop family, led play experience ideas through play resources booklet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Annually	CBC	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan; Fitter Future for All;  Children and Young People's strategy

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>C.4 Encourage use of shared space by older children and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of activity programmes e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Summer Schemes/seasonal activity</li> <li>– Physical activity programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ongoing consultation with children and young people to identify and address their needs – surveys and youth forums</li> <li>• Focus groups with children and young people</li> </ul>	Play Partnership	CBC	CAN PEACE III;  Programme for Cohesion, Integration and Sharing;
<b>C.5 Work with local residents/communities to enhance green spaces to promote opportunity for quality play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore natural play space developments</li> <li>• Promote inter-generational working</li> </ul>	Year 2	CBC	CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Fitter Future for All



# ACTION PLAN D

## AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Implementation of Action Plan D will bring about the following outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play will be led and developed across the Borough in a strategic, co-ordinated manner</li> <li>• Play benefits will be promoted and play will be on key development and health and wellbeing agenda</li> <li>• Play will contribute to better life style and health and wellbeing choices</li> </ul>			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>D.1 Support and promote work of the Play Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings of Play Partnership and membership review</li> <li>• Training Needs Analysis for members</li> <li>• Identify training opportunities where possible</li> <li>• Play strategy developed and launched</li> </ul>	Year 1 and ongoing	CBC	Play and Leisure Implementation plan
<b>D.2 Promote play, benefits of play and practical opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play conferences and workshops; information and guidance on play benefits</li> <li>• Engage with local communities and residents to promote a positive image of play</li> <li>• Continue to identify and resolve barriers to play</li> <li>• Annual Play Day</li> <li>• Promote the role of volunteers – play rangers</li> </ul>	Annually	Play Partnership	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  UNCRC

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LED BY	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
<b>D.3 Ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to play at Borough level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with internal departments/services (Community Services, Technical Services, Good Relations) to advise and direct on play policy and provision as appropriate</li> <li>• Consider how the Play strategy can impact on other plans e.g. proposed Green Space strategy, Hearty Lives, Council Wellbeing strategy, PCSP</li> <li>• Work closely with Planning Service, including providing training and advice on relevant planning policy statements</li> <li>• Ensure Play is covered in any emerging Masterplans for the Borough</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CBC	Play and Leisure Implementation plan;  CBC Corporate plan;  CBC Play and Leisure Action Plan;  Physical Activity and Sports Development strategy
<b>D.4 Ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to play under the new “super council” structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop working relationships with partner councils</li> <li>• Explore potential for Play Development Officer within the new council structures</li> <li>• Consider how the play strategy can be implemented within the new structures under RPA</li> <li>• Participation in transition teams and Community Planning</li> </ul>	Ongoing	CBC	Review of Public Administration



## 6.0 Implementing the Strategy

Whilst the strategy identifies the actions which Carrickfergus Borough Council will undertake in order to achieve its goals, it is also concerned that it should clearly establish how its strategic themes would be translated into real actions on the ground. Implementation of the Play strategy will require the following process:



### Management Structure

The proposed management structure for the Play Strategy consists primarily of the Carrickfergus Play Partnership which will meet quarterly while the Parks and Countryside Development Officer will hold regular meetings with Council colleagues to review progress and plan ahead.

Reflecting on the goal of the OFMDFM Play and Leisure Implementation Plan to build children and young person friendly communities, the Play Partnership will ensure that their voices are heard and that service users have the opportunity to inform and influence strategy implementation through regular feedback.

## Communicating the Strategy

Central to the overall impact of the Carrickfergus Play strategy will be the ability of those involved to communicate it to the following key groups and agencies:



Whilst the Play Partnership can use existing networks across the District to communicate the strategy, it will be important to undertake a proactive awareness raising campaign, including:-

- Play groups and play workers
- Schools, educational providers and youth organisations
- Community and voluntary sector organisations
- The wider Carrickfergus community
- External Support Agencies, including:-
  - NIHE
  - OFMDFM
  - Politicians and policy influencers.

Whilst it appears obvious that the most important group to communicate the strategy to is the community which it will benefit, this is one group which can often remain unaware of the services and support available to it, even at local level. Achieving the following communication objectives will help the Play Partnership in Carrickfergus address this issue:-

- To ensure that key stakeholders, including the Carrickfergus community, are aware that the Play Strategy exists
- To communicate that the Play Strategy is based on an evidenced and growing need within the community
- To communicate progress in implementing the strategy and carrying out the actions identified in it over the next three years.

The following table identifies the proposed actions for communicating the strategy and raising awareness of the Play strategy, its work and services.

The following activities are proposed as suitable actions to communicate the strategy and, in doing so, raise awareness of the play service offered by Carrickfergus Borough Council and the Play & Leisure Partnership.



<b>Strategy Launch</b>	An official launch of the Carrickfergus Play strategy will take place to directly present the strategy to all of the key stakeholders. This will also generate PR opportunities in the local press serving the Carrickfergus community.	Year 1
<b>Education and Outreach work</b>	To undertake a proactive outreach programme, including educational prevention programmes to raise awareness of the play strategy.	Ongoing
<b>Secure local and regional publicity and awareness</b>	Communicate the work of the Play Partnership to external communities and organisations across Carrickfergus, the CAN cluster and further afield.	Quarterly
<b>Utilise social media to promote participation</b>	Recognising the need to actively engage with older children and young people through social media and mobile phone applications.	Year 2 ongoing

### Strategy Evaluation

Carrickfergus Borough Council will facilitate the monitoring of progress against the implementation milestones established in the strategy. However, it is also aware of its evaluation responsibilities. Many of the actions set out in the strategy are long-term processes such as peace building, awareness raising and working in partnerships.

As a result any evaluation must focus on qualitative outputs around impact and change, brought about through the action plan as well as quantitative, numerical based outputs and targets. The proposed evaluation framework is set out overleaf. This information can be logged by the Partnership therefore making the evaluation process easier at the end of the timeframe.



## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION FACTOR	EVALUATION TOOL	WHO	WHEN	OUTCOME
<b>Representative and responsive Play Partnership</b>	Membership Review Training Needs Analysis	Council	Ongoing	All relevant stakeholders are represented on the Play Partnership
<b>Geographic spread of play facilities across the Borough</b>	Mapping of facilities Analysis of demographics	Play Partnership	Year 1	Play facilities are spread across the Borough according to evidenced need
<b>Provision of high quality, accessible play facilities</b>	Maintenance records	Council	Ongoing	The Borough's citizens benefit from quality accessible play provision
<b>Access to play and leisure by the Borough's children and young people</b>	Monitoring of usage levels Survey with children and young people  Survey with parents/carers  Focus groups  Youth Forum consultation	Council	Annually	Children and young people gain the many benefits derived from play and leisure, including educational, physical and emotional wellbeing
<b>Participation by vulnerable groups – disadvantaged communities, children with disabilities</b>	Attendance at events Consultation with key stakeholders	Play Partnership	Annually	Those most at risk of marginalisation are supported to engage in play and benefit from its many positive outcomes
<b>Provision of activity programmes tailored to users' needs and interests</b>	Uptake of programmes Survey with children and young people  Survey with parents/carers  Focus groups  Youth Forum consultation	Play Partnership	Annually	Play provision is tailored to user needs and interests, including being age appropriate to ensure increased and sustained uptake of provision

EVALUATION FACTOR	EVALUATION TOOL	WHO	WHEN	OUTCOME
<b>Stable community relations supported through playwork</b>	Uptake of play worker training on inclusion and participation  Feedback from play workers	Play Partnership	Year 2	Community relations across the Borough can benefit from access to play work skills promoting inclusion and community cohesion
<b>Establishing play as a family activity</b>	Level of family use of play facilities  Focus groups with parents/carers  Uptake of family activities	Play Partnership	Annually	Participation in play activities and use of play facilities is increased and sustained as a result of families developing a culture of visiting the play facilities
<b>Co-ordinated and strategic approach to play at Borough level</b>	Regular meetings of Play Partnership  Regular liaison with relevant Council departments	Council	Ongoing	The Borough citizens benefit from Council's strategic approach to play, informed by all relevant departments working together, avoiding duplication of provision.



## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1 – Socio-Economic Profile**



### **Appendix 2 – General Comment on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31)**



### **Appendix 3 – Carrickfergus Borough Children's Charter**



If you do not have access to a QR code reader, please visit [www.carrickfergus.org/play](http://www.carrickfergus.org/play) to download any of the above appendices or alternatively contact us using the information at the back of this document for further help.



## Notes





Carrickfergus Borough

For further information on play in Carrickfergus Borough,  
please contact:-

Parks and Countryside Service  
Carrickfergus Borough Council  
Museum and Civic Centre  
11 Antrim Street  
Carrickfergus  
BT38 7DG

T: 028 9335 8000

E: [play@carrickfergus.org](mailto:play@carrickfergus.org)

[www.carrickfergus.org/play](http://www.carrickfergus.org/play)